

C O P Y  
MILWAUKEE JEWISH COUNCIL  
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Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

MJC, ADL and Wisconsin Council of Rabbis

Oppose Released Time Amendment

A proposal to amend the Wisconsin Constitution to permit the release of public school children during school hours is opposed by the Milwaukee Jewish Council and the Wisconsin Regional Office of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. The proposal will be on the ballot in the April 4 election as Referendum No. 4. In addition, the Wisconsin Council of Rabbis also opposed the amendment. Statements in opposition to the proposed amendment were made in October 1969 when it was originally introduced. These positions were reconfirmed this week by the leaders of all the organizations including Rabbi Isaac Lerer, President of the Wisconsin Council of Rabbis.

In opposing the statement, the Milwaukee Jewish Council and the ADL call the program "an intrusion by the State into religious affairs of our citizens". Released time programs require that the State take attendance in Churches and Synagogues where children attend. It stigmatizes those children who must remain in class if a Synagogue or Church of their choice is not available or if their parents choose not to have them participate in the released time program. It thus promotes divisiveness among our students and it implicitly places the influence of the State in favor of religious instruction and very often a certain kind of religious instruction.

The statement of the Wisconsin Council of Rabbis regarding this released time program said that "the responsibility for religious education belongs to the home, the Synagogue and Church and should not be shared with the State or any of its agencies including the public schools. The released time program would make it incumbent upon school authorities to set up appropriate machinery for receiving cataloging and filing consent cards which authorize the release of children for religious education".

The Milwaukee Jewish Council, the ADL and the Wisconsin Council of Rabbis emphasized that the administration of a religious education program by the schools is, not only divisive and burdensome but violates the principle of separation of Church and State.

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